

We claim:

1. A rich client application delivery ("RCAD") system comprising:

a server computer connected to a computer network, storing a target application image and executing a RCAD server application, wherein the target application image comprises a collection of files necessary to execute a target application;

a client computer connected to the computer network and having a processor capable of executing a client application, wherein:

the client application is adapted to communicate with the RCAD server application through the computer network to retrieve portions of files in response to requests by the processor to read from or write to the portion of the file;

the client application is adapted to maintain a copy of the portion of the file in a memory associated with the client computer;

the client application is adapted to retrieve the portion of the file stored in the memory in response to subsequent requests by the processor to read from or write to the portion of the file.

2. A method of delivering a computer application across a wide area network comprising:

providing a server computer connected to a computer network;

storing a target application image on the server computer;

5        executing a RCAD server application on the server computer, wherein the target application image comprises a collection of files necessary to execute a target application;

providing a client application capable of execution on a client computer;

10        the client application transmitting requests for at least a portion of a file to the RCAD server application on the server computer in response to requests by the client computer to read from or write to the portion of the file;

the server computer transmitting at least a portion of the requested  
15        file to the requests to retrieve portions of files;

maintaining a copy of the portion of the file in a memory associated with the client computer;

retrieving the portion of the file stored in the memory in response to subsequent requests by the client computer to read from or write to the  
20        portion of the file.

3. A rich client application delivery ("RCAD") system comprising:
- means for providing a server computer connected to a computer network;
  - means for storing a target application image on the server computer;
  - 5 means for executing a RCAD server application on the server computer, wherein the target application image comprises a collection of files necessary to execute a target application;
  - means for providing a client application capable of execution on a client computer;
  - 10 the client application comprising means for transmitting requests for at least a portion of a file to the RCAD server application on the server computer in response to requests by the client computer to read from or write to the portion of the file;
  - the server computer comprising means for transmitting at least a
  - 15 portion of the requested file to the requests to retrieve portions of files;
  - means for maintaining a copy of the portion of the file in a memory associated with the client computer;
  - means for retrieving the portion of the file stored in the memory in response to subsequent requests by the client computer to read from or write
  - 20 to the portion of the file.